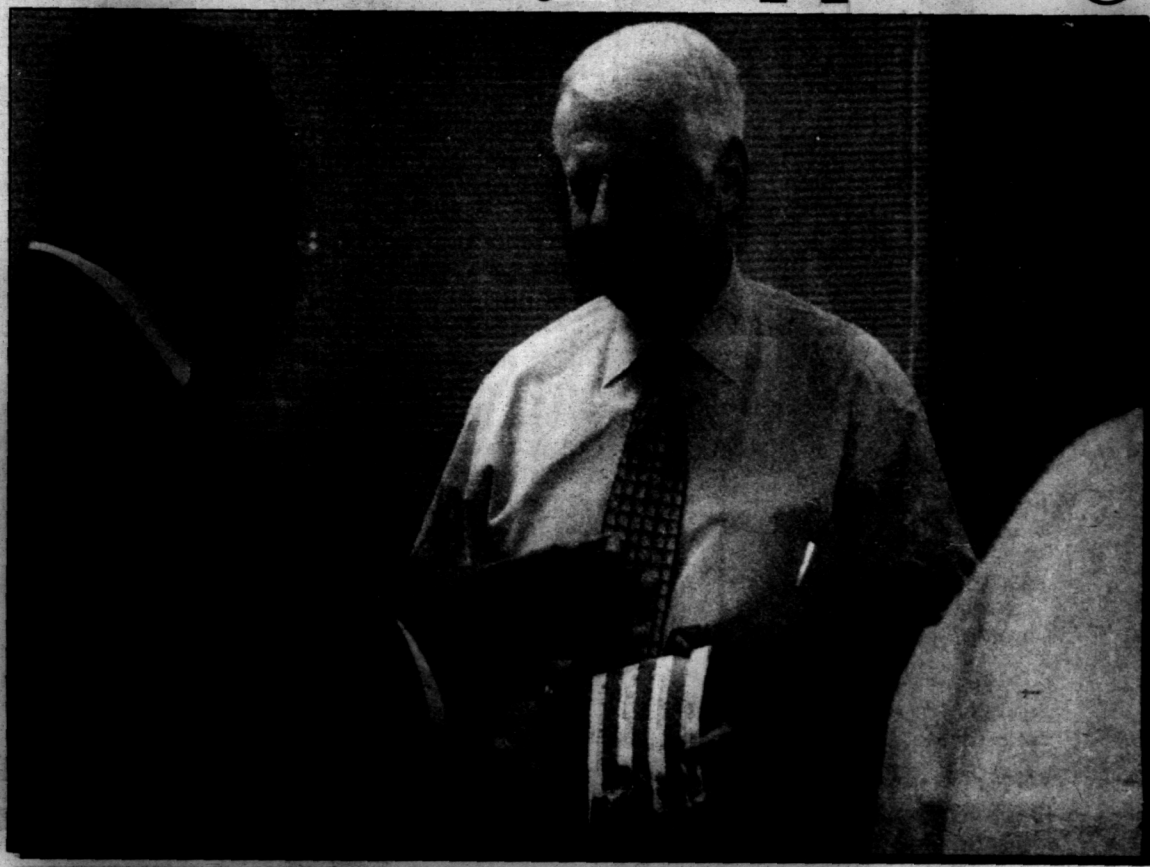


**JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION**

# 'Something extraordinary' happening

Similarly, people are ready for a spiritual awakening today, he said. "The



**CHURCH PLANTING** — SBC President Bobby Welch (center) met with church planters in Tennessee on March 22, encouraging them to stay focused on spreading the Gospel. Welch paused during a break in the meeting to talk with church planters Henry and Barbara Wilson. (BP photo by Norm Miller)

Referring to the laborers of the harvest, Welch noted how often

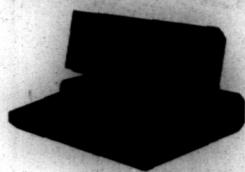
The SBC Annual Meeting will be held June 21-22, 2005, at the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville. Mississippi Baptist churches planning to send messengers should request messenger cards from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Executive Administration, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson at (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. Email: [bbbox@mbcb.org](mailto:bbbox@mbcb.org). Messenger cards are mailed only by church request.



**EVERYONE CAN** — Participants in the Mississippi stop of the Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge bus tour pose for a group photo on September 9 outside the Northpark campus of Colonial Heights Church in Ridgeland. Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Bobby Welch, pastor of First Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., is using the 50-state bus tour to promote his SBC-wide goal of one million baptisms between June 2005 and June 2006. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# Culture of death moves forward

At press time, as Terri Schiavo lay in a Florida hospice bed bleeding from her sunken eyes and parched tongue due to the withholding of food and water, the nation debated endlessly on whether her life and the lives of many others like her are really worth living. For all the haggling over next-of-kin and persistent vegetative state versus minimally cognizant state, that's the basic question, isn't it?

The answer to that question will one day affect us all, one way or another, so it would serve us well just now to recall the last occasion on which this subject was so openly a part of the societal mainstream of the day. The time was the 1930s. The place was Nazi Germany.

Although euthanasia (a term coined by the Germans) had been proposed by intellectuals and elitists as early as the 1920s, the rise of the Nazi regime and their resort to war in 1939 opened the door to widespread practice of eliminating "life not worth living." Code named "Aktion T4," the program initially targeted mentally defective newborns and infants. So effective was the program that physically malformed newborns and infants — even

those who might be missing only an arm or leg, or have a cleft palate or club foot — were quickly added to the lists of "life not worth living."

When Christian leaders protested, they were beheaded or simply vanished. With the cold efficiency for which the Nazis were known, it wasn't long before the elderly and diseased were marked for elimination, too, and eventually people of any age that manifested any mental or physical defects of any severity. Then the time came for gypsies, the darker races without Aryan features, and the Jews.

Millions of people were killed, as the German people became accustomed to the concept of government-declared "life not

worth living." For whatever reasons, the people didn't want to know what was going on. They became calloused to the slaughter. There are even reports that local children often lined the road leading to the Hadamar euthanasia center to taunt the busloads of doomed people with, "Here come some more to be gassed!"

Sadly, America is well down that slippery slope to determining which lives are not worth living. First, intellectuals and elitists convinced us that unborn babies would be better off dead than defective or unwanted. Then we were told that terminally-ill people should be allowed to seek assistance in legally ending their lives — which has indeed come to fruition in the state of Oregon.

Now the debate is raging over whether Americans like Terri Schiavo, who is severely brain-damaged but not brain-dead nor being kept alive artificially, should be involuntarily euthanized in the most cruel fashion of dehydration and starvation. If she can be killed, like unborn children, for the convenience of someone else, where will it stop?

If human history is an indicator, the answer is discouraging. When such a door is flung open, it's hard to ever get it closed again.

We seem to have lost track some time ago of the fact that God, our Creator, is the



**POWERFUL MESSAGE** — In one of the more visible acts of support for Terri Schiavo, several children joined in a silent declaration of "LIFE" for the disabled Florida woman during a rally at the Florida statehouse to protest the court-ordered removal of her feeding tube slated for March 18. Efforts to save her life continue despite legal attempts by her husband to starve or dehydrate her to death. (BP photo)

Author and Finisher of life. After all, He spoke all matter into existence. Surely He mourns every innocent life that is taken by the hand of man, every life for which He had a special plan.

Surely He is offended by our arrogance and self-centeredness when we take for ourselves what is rightfully His. With all our worldly sophistication and extensive education and well-established jurisprudence, that's what we have determined we will do.

Terri Schiavo will be gone soon. With other important stories like the most recent earthquake in Indonesia and not-so-important stories like Michael Jackson's courtroom pajamas, the reasons for her demise will be forgotten and the culture of death in this country will move forward.

Will one of us be the next "life not worth living?" Right now, no one can say for sure.

## TWICE-BLESSED:

### Help for hurting pastors

By Dale Holloway  
Bivocational Specialist  
Miss. Baptist Conv. Board



I see more than a legion of hurting, frustrated, unfulfilled, and depressed pastors. Jesus is so sensitive and kind. He hurts in His heart over these suffering servants. We are commanded, "Weep with them who weep." (Romans 12:15).

Half of all Southern Baptist Convention churches (a total of 18,000) have less than 60 people in Sunday School attendance. Over 11,000 of these churches have a bivocational pastor. (Many bivocationally-led churches have more than 60 people in Sunday School attendance.)

Therefore, over 7,000 fully-supported pastors are in these churches with less than 60 people in Sunday School attendance. I challenge all our "double duty" pastors to feel their frustration and make a commitment to complement their ministry.

Consider their painful frustrations. They agonize over their families not having basic economic necessities. Some salaries are such that pastors barely meet minimum wage and qualify for food stamps. They are the most vulnerable to forced termination that may require moving out of a

church-owned home. They have no immediate opportunity for church employment, and their secular skills or credentials may be limited.

The income from the church requires the pastor's wife to work. This puts an unbalanced burden on her with three full-time responsibilities: the home, the church, and work. This can lead to unbearable stress on harmony in the home. Church members have an unrealistic expectation of the pastor performing all the ministry since, "We pay him full-time." This diminishes their willingness to connect to their ministry; they are robbed of the blessing of shared ministry.

What can we bivocational pastors do to lift some of his burden as we walk with him through the Valley of Shad-ows? We can intentionally choose one of these brothers in our local associations and become a Barnabus — a partner to him and his church.

Share fifth Sunday services on a rotating basis. Explore with him ways he can elevate his economic situation, such as substitute teaching or contract work that fits his ministry schedule. Join him in attending association and convention meetings or ministry courses. Plan leisure or recreation activities in which your family and his family can both benefit. Become a prayer part-

ner so you can connect with God and the Holy Spirit in strengthening both your lives and ministries.

I trust that our love and sincere concerns for our "single-role" brothers will be picked up and amplified by associations and state conventions. Have Baptist leaders and writers caused this dilemma by insisting that a "worthy" church will call a full-time seminary graduate who will live on the field in the house the church has built?

Many congregations with less than 60 people in average Sunday School attendance may love their pastors dearly, but they simply do not have the resources to care for his financial needs and still have funds to participate admirably in mission causes.

I believe all of those who hurt in our hearts for these brothers will find ways to help.

Holloway, a retired Mississippi educator and active bivocational pastor, can be reached at 1758 Florence-Byram Road, Florence, MS 39073. Telephone: (601) 845-2107 or (601) 845-6496. E-mail: [bivoldr@aol.com](mailto:bivoldr@aol.com).



# Emerging Church Movement making waves

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A recently developed way of envisioning church, known as the Emerging Church Movement, deals carelessly with Scripture and compromises the Gospel, according to a prominent evangelical scholar and a Southern Baptist seminary president — but Brian McLaren, one of the movement's leaders, told Baptist Press that such criticisms are unfounded and that the Emerging Church Movement is "seeking to be more faithful to Christ" in the current postmodern cultural context.

In a book entitled, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, which is scheduled to be published in June by Zondervan, theologian D.A. Carson defines the Emerging Church Movement as a group of people who believe the church must use new modes of expressing the Gospel as western culture adopts a postmodern mindset.

"At the heart of the 'movement' ... lies the conviction that changes in the culture signal that a new church is 'emerging,'" writes Carson, who serves as research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. "Christian leaders must therefore adapt to this emerging church. Those who fail to do so are blind to the cultural accretions that hide the gospel behind forms of thought and modes of expression that no longer communicate with the new generation."

According to Carson, the movement arose as a protest against the institutional church, modernism and seeker-sensitive churches. At times it is difficult to identify with precision the participants and parameters of the movement, he writes.

Carson acknowledges that the Emerging Church Movement has encouraged evangelicals to take note of cultural trends and has emphasized authenticity among believers.

He criticizes the movement, however, for a reductionistic understanding of modernism and an inappropriate dismissal of confessional Christianity.

Carson asserts that some Emerging Church leaders are "painfully reductionistic about modernism and the confessional Christianity that forged its way through the modernist period" and that they "give the impression of dismissing" Christianity.

Carson argues that many thinkers in the movement shy away from asserting that Christianity is true and authoritative. He also says that the Emerging Church Movement frequently fails to use Scripture as the normative standard of truth and instead appeals to tradition.

In response to Carson, McLaren told Baptist Press that "Dr. Carson doesn't understand us."

McLaren, who is the founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church near Baltimore, and was listed as one of 25 influential evangelicals by *TIME* magazine, said that he rejects the label "movement" to describe the Emerging Church.

"I generally don't even use the term movement at this point," he said. "I think it's more of a conversation. It's a group of people who are talking about the Gospel and church and mission, especially in terms of changes going on in our culture that some people call a shift from modern to postmodern culture."

In contrast to the cultural imperialism demonstrated by believers in the past, McLaren believes Christians should present Christianity through loving attitudes rather than logical arguments.

"Those of us in the west now... realize that there were a lot of bad consequences of European and American people trying to tell everybody else how things are," he said. "We feel that there's got to be a lot more humility and

a lot more gentleness and that the Gospel is made credible not by how we argue and make truth claims. But it's made credible by the love and the good deeds that flow from our lives and our community."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., questions McLaren's claim to be giving a credible witness for the Gospel. In an Internet commentary posted on crosswalk.com Mohler argues that McLaren's claim to uphold historic Christian faith and simultaneously avoid articulating truth in propositional form is self-contradictory.

Responding to McLaren's book, entitled *A Generous Orthodoxy*, Mohler writes, "Embracing the worldview of the postmodern age, he embraces relativism at the cost of clarity in matters of truth and intends to redefine Christianity for this new age, largely in terms of an eccentric mixture of elements he would take from virtually every theological position and variant."

"...As a postmodernist, he considers himself free from any concern for propositional truthfulness, and simply wants the Christian community to embrace a pluriform understanding of truth as a way out of doctrinal conflict and impasse."

Mohler charges McLaren with speaking about clear-cut issues in an unbiblical and ambiguous manner. "When it comes to issues such as the exclusivity of the gospel, the identity of Jesus Christ as both fully human and fully divine, the authoritative character of Scripture as written revelation, and the clear teaching of Scripture concerning issues such as homosexuality, this movement simply refuses to answer the questions," Mohler writes.

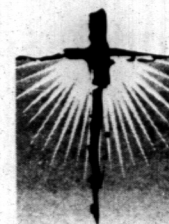
"A responsible theological argument must acknowledge that difficult questions demand to be answered. We are not faced with an endless array of doctrinal variants from which we can pick and choose."

"Homosexuality either will or will not be embraced as normative. The church either will or will not accept a radical revisioning of the missionary task. We will either see those who

have not come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as persons to whom we should extend a clear gospel message and a call for decision, or we will simply come alongside them to tell our story as they tell their own."

McLaren answers Mohler by saying that he is seeking to contextualize the Gospel as many Southern Baptists do. At times contextualizing the Gospel may mean encouraging people to become followers of Jesus without encouraging them to become a part of the institutional church, McLaren added.

"Dr. Albert Mohler is one of the people who have talked about this," McLaren said. "But yet there are many Southern Baptists who are doing this very thing. ...Many missionaries are... realizing that the issue isn't whether a person identifies with a religion that now is seen



MISSISSIPPI  
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THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

## Record

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as a western European religion, but the important thing is to help people identify with Jesus and become followers of Jesus."

When asked whether a person must trust Christ as dying to make atonement for sin in order to be a Christian, McLaren replied, "I want to help people understand everything they can about the cross. ... I wouldn't say that having that understanding (Jesus dying as a substitute for sinful humanity) is all that it means to be a Christian. I think that some people might have that understanding and not be interested in following Jesus. They want Jesus' blood to pay for their sins so they can go to heaven, but they aren't really interested in following Jesus in this life."

McLaren declined to give his opinion on the morality of homosexuality, saying that the issue has become inappropriately political. "I have my own opinions, but I don't believe that the smartest thing for me to do is to go around and make those varying opinions a reason to separate myself from other Christians."

## Missionaries robbed

LIMURU, Kenya (BP) — New missionaries attending a camp designed to teach them about life in Africa got an unscheduled—and frightening—lesson when they were robbed at machete-point. Robbers entered a campsite early March 21 where new missionaries sent out by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and SIL International/Wycliffe were sleeping. No one was hurt in the incident. A group of 45 missionaries and staff were in the final days of a special orientation program for new workers in central, eastern and southern Africa when the incident happened. The program, called 40 Days and 40 Nights, introduces missionaries to life in Africa. Southern Baptist missionary Judi Sprayberry, who directs the orientation camp with her husband Jack, said that God definitely watched over the new missionaries. During the first day of the bush camp part of orientation, the group prayerwalked around the campsite, asking for God's protection. "God really answered those prayers," she said. "He protected this family and the rest of the camp. No one was hurt. He was watching over us." The orientation continued despite the incident. After some debriefing and counseling, the participants decided to finish the last 10 days of training in the villages. "During this orientation, we try to give a brief look at what life in Africa is all about," Sprayberry said. "We talked to the new missionaries about how one of the sad realities is that violence and danger is what life is like in some parts of Africa. I'm sorry that we learned this lesson the hard way."

## Looking back

10 years ago

Southern Baptists are losing ground in the South, according to Charles Chaney, Home Mission Board vice president of extension for church starting in Atlanta, who urged greater church planting efforts in Southern cities and suburbs.

20 years ago

During their annual meeting, trustees of New Orleans Seminary elect Jack Glaze, head of the department of religion and philosophy at Mississippi College, as the Chester L. Quarles professor of missions.

50 years ago

State WMU convention attendance hits a record, with a total of 1636 registered for the event held at First Church, Jackson. State membership in WMU and its related organizations is approximately 80,000.



## Rankin Assoc. hosts Ministry Teams seminar

Rankin Association will host a seminar entitled, Building Powerful Ministry Teams, on April 15-16 at the association's headquarters in Brandon. The seminar will be conducted by the Next Level Leadership Network of the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in suburban Atlanta.

The seminar will begin with a light meal at 6:30 p.m. on April 15, and conclude at noon on April 16. A continental breakfast will also be served beginning at 8 a.m. on April 16, with the seminar continuing at 8:30 a.m. Cost for meals and books is \$10 per person. Pastors, church staff, and lay leaders are invited to attend.

Deadline for registration is April 13. To register or for more information, contact Sharon Brewer at (601) 939-2182. E-mail: sbrewer@rankinbaptists.com. The web site for the Next Level Leadership Network is [www.nextlevel-leadership.com](http://www.nextlevel-leadership.com).

Mississippi Baptist Convention President Gene Henderson said he will be attending the seminar. "Ministry Teams are literally the next level in leading our churches forward. You will receive valuable information and inspiration if you invest in the opportunity," he said.

# Zambian President Mwanawada baptized

LUSAKA, Zambia (BP) — The president of Zambia, in acknowledging his faith in Jesus Christ, recently was baptized in a public service, Southern Baptist missionaries report.

A crowd clapped and cheered as President Levy Mwanawasa (mwah-nah-WAH-sah) rose from the water in an outdoor baptistery behind a Baptist seminary chapel in Lusaka, Zambia's capital. The event drew hundreds of people, including public officials, leaders and pastors from the area and neighboring countries.

"This baptism was an incredible occasion for the Baptist witness to many people who we have not had in church before," said Troy Lewis, a Southern Baptist missionary in the southern African nation of more than 10 million people. "They heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

On the day of his baptism, Mwanawasa shared his spiritual journey before a packed chapel service. He told listeners he had been "struck" by Jesus — similar to the Apostle Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. Mwanawasa, a successful lawyer and former vice president, took office in 2002. Respected for his reputation for honesty, he was known as "Mr. Integrity" even by his political opponents before his election. Now in his mid-50s, he survived a near-fatal car accident in 1992 but insists he is in excellent health.

Mwanawasa remembers attending a Baptist school as a boy, but his relationship with Christ began to transform when he started attending Twin Palm Baptist Church in Lusaka in 2003. The small church meets at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia in Lusaka.

As he came week after week with his entourage, the church tried to maintain business as usual—but it wasn't easy.

"All of us here were immensely excited about this," Lewis said. "Our excitement and prayers increased when he returned to church again and kept coming whenever he was in the country."

The president began asking questions about the Christian faith and how he could join the church. Church members answered his questions and ministered to him during difficult times. After Mwanawasa began attending the church, his mother died from injuries caused by a fire. He also lost his two brothers. One died unexpectedly of illness; the other was murdered.

Mwanawasa soon shared how Christ had moved in his life — and that he wanted to be baptized. Franklin Kilpatrick, missionary in Zambia for 35 years, helped disciple Mwanawasa during this process. Kilpatrick and his wife, Paula, are members of Twin Palm Baptist Church.

"The impact is not just in Zambia; this could have an impact on an international level," said Kilpatrick, who is temporarily on U.S. assignment. "He could impact a lot of leaders. He is in a position of influence, and people need encouragement."

The Kilpatricks were originally concerned about drawing too much attention to the event. Local missionaries tried to remain low-key about Mwanawasa's decision. But the news quickly spread all over Zambia — and to other parts of the world.

Kilpatrick believes Mwanawasa's decision is real. Others have commented on how the president's life has changed. He already has invited friends and lead-



**NEW BELIEVER** — Levy Mwanawasa, president of Zambia, rises from an outdoor baptistery during a recent service at Twin Palm Baptist Church in Lusaka, Zambia's capital. The event drew hundreds of people, including public officials and other leaders from southern Africa. (BP photo by Troy Lewis)

ers from around the world to attend church with him.

Paula Kilpatrick is excited about what God has planned for the future. "We feel like the story is not over," she said.

The president is just one of many spiritual success stories in Zambia. Last year, 116 Baptist churches were started, bringing the total number of churches to 985 — plus 124 mission congregations. Some missionaries believe Mwanawasa's baptism is an exclamation point on what God is beginning to do in the country.

## Bible institute opens adjacent to Southwestern

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Southwestern Seminary joined members of the Fort Worth community and Texas State Rep. Anna Mowery in dedicating the International Reference Library for Biblical Research in Fort Worth on March 12.

The two-story facility, conceived by E. Earle Ellis, research professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary and past president of the Institute for Biblical Research, is located adjacent to the seminary's main campus on property leased to

the group in 2002. Under the lease agreement with the seminary, the library will hold the property for 30 years at the rate of one dollar per year.

Organizers of the library call it a North American "Tyndale House," a place where scholars can study and live at the same time as they do in Cambridge, England. The library is complete with an upstairs apartment and guest scholar's room. The library also will host lecture series annually.

"We have worked to establish this library for the past 10 years," Ellis said. "We have raised about \$1 million, half in cash and the other half in gifts in kind. The other gift of great substance was the gift of a 7,000-volume library by a retired professor."

Several foundations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area were among the contributors, while Institute for Biblical Research members, who founded the library as a separate nonprofit organization, also contributed \$100,000 to see their vision become reality, Ellis said.

Paul Wolfe, associate professor of New Testament and assistant dean for biblical stud-

ies at Southwestern, is the library's superintendent. A former homebuilder, Wolfe oversaw the renovation of the building where the library is now housed. He said the importance of the facility should not be overlooked.

"There was a day when the evangelical voice was rather muted within the academy, seminaries and universities alike. Today, evangelical scholarship is making a significant contribution to the biblical and theological disciplines. But there is much more to be done," Wolfe said.

"This reference library exists to continue to nurture faithful biblical scholarship in service to the church and her institutions of learning," he continued, noting, "The importance of a project like this should not be underestimated lest we again find ourselves sliding into obscurity in contemporary culture's world of ideas. Ideas have a history and consequences. This library exists to contribute positively to that history and to the articulation of ideas and understandings that will shape future generations in harmony with a biblical worldview."

## WCC sets another enrollment record

William Carey College (WCC) saw a seven percent expansion in enrollment in the Spring semester, from 2736 students in 2004 to a record 2921 students in 2005 — an increase of 185 students. Record enrollments were also set in the recent fall and winter terms.

William Carey College is owned and operated by the Mississippi Baptist Convention and governed by a board of trustees. It was founded in 1906 and operated as Mississippi Woman's College for decades. It was renamed William Carey College in 1954, in honor of the father of modern missions. The school became co-educational with the advent of the name change.

The 99-year-old school has a main campus in Hattiesburg, with campuses in Gulfport and in New Orleans. WCC is on the trimester system with three 10-week sessions, a summer mini-term, and one regular summer term.

William Carey College offers bachelor's degrees in the areas of arts, humanities and sciences, education and psychology, theatre, communication, and mass communication with an emphasis in public relations or jour-

nalism, business, religion, music, and nursing. WCC students can earn master's degrees in business, education, and psychology, and a specialist degree in elementary education.

"William Carey College is a private school that pays attention to the individual student and offers a quality education," said Barbara Hamilton, the school's executive assistant to the president. "The students know everyone on campus and feel like part of an extended family."

The college is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. WCC also holds state and national accreditations in the areas of education, music, music therapy, and nursing.

Approximately 85% of students attend Carey with the assistance of financial aid. Financial aid opportunities available to students include academic and talent based scholarships, Pell Grants, and government-funded student loans.

For more information on WCC, contact the school at 498 Tuscan Ave., Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5499, or visit the school's web site at [www.wmcarey.edu](http://www.wmcarey.edu).



## A KEY

I was walking along the road one day and just happened to look down and see a key. Maybe a ray from the sun had caught my attention as it bounced off of the key and caused me to look, or maybe I was just supposed to find this key. I stopped and picked it up and was surprised at the flood of thoughts that begin to rush through my mind. Who lost it? How did they lose it? Did somebody just throw it away? What did it open, start, or close? Is there anyway to get the key back to whomever it belonged? Is someone looking for it or does the person know or even care that it is missing? As I was walking along I started giving answers to my own questions. As I looked at the key, it appeared to me that it was not a car key or a house key. It appeared to be a key to some sort of lockbox, and I imagined that there was some locker or safety box that either was open and could not be locked or locked and could not be opened. As I walked along thinking about the key that I held in my hand, I reflected on Jesus' thoughts about keys.

In the days of our Lord keys could have been shaped differently than keys are today, but



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

basically they have always had the same usage. **A key helps protect, reject, or project.** Think about these things as you listen to Jesus in Matthew 16 when He says to His followers, "I give to you the keys to the Kingdom." There are certainly times and ways that our Lord has provided protection for us. Keys do **protect**. He knew that Kingdom servants would need protection and help beyond their own abilities to help fend off evil and to avoid destruction. He said He would send us forth as "lambs among wolves," and in those cases we must be as "wise as serpents and as harmless as doves." The Lord does protect His own. At times when the coalitions of evil sought to destroy our Lord and His followers, God Himself intervened and protected them.

In another way, maybe the other side of the same key is the reality that a key rejects. It is a

truism, the old saying that expresses the thought that locks are made to keep honest folks out. There may be some truth to that but locks can keep everyone out. Keys can be used to **reject**. The mighty army of Pharaoh said, "We will destroy you, Israel." God said, "I don't think so," and He locked the opening of the Red Sea. "Daniel, you will be destroyed by lions!" God said, "No, he want," and God sent His angel, who locked the jaws of the fierce lions. The tyrants, haters of God, and destroyers of good have at times tried to hurt the Kingdom work, and God says, "No." He fiends them off and gives new hope.

I believe that the Lord's most significant thought related to keys is that they **project**. In some ways this is the most exciting thing about a key. You can unlock a door not knowing what is on the other side,

uncertain of the opportunities, obligations, or surprises that may come. Sometimes you may unlock a door to let someone in and what they are and what they bring to your life is nothing short of wonderful. So it is that in a glorious sense our Lord has called us to be door openers entering into the projection of life, as He wants it to be and experiences of faith as we walk with Him and trust Him. It is an adventure where the Lord is constantly bringing us into new arenas and others into our sphere of living.

Do not keep all the doors of your life locked. I have watched so many people who have had some bad experience or have been so fearful in their own heart that they would never let anyone else in and they would never go out to anyone. They lived most of their life in a self-imposed isolation brought on by their unused keys. Don't let that happen to you. Life is too short, the possibilities too many, and the blessings you can bring to others too sweet to miss if you do not use the keys that God has given you.

The author may be contacted at  
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### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Evangelicals expand public policy approach

WASHINGTON (BP) — A leading evangelical association has issued a call for a broader approach to public policy issues than evangelicals have been known for in the past, a call that is being supported by such Christian leaders as Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville; James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Co.; Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship in Lansdowne, Va.; and Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Cal.



Land

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) recently held a discussion on Capitol Hill of a document that promises policy efforts related not only to such issues as abortion, marriage and religious liberty but poverty, human rights, peace and the environment. While it says evangelicals "have failed to engage with the breadth, depth and consistency to which we are called," the statement lists seven guidelines for political engagement by Christians:

- To guard religious liberty and freedom of conscience.
- To promote family life and defend children.
- To uphold the sanctity of human life.
- To gain justice and compassion for the "poor and vulnerable."
- To safeguard human rights.
- To work for peace and the restraint of violence.
- To protect creation.

Other signers included Barrett Duke, the ERLC's vice president for public policy; NAE President Ted Haggard; Jack Hayford, president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel; Walter

Kaiser, president of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary; Diane Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy; David Neff, editor of Christianity Today; John Perkins, founder of Voice of Calvary Ministries; Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action; and author and apologist Ravi Zacharias.

The NAE represents 30 million people in 45,000 churches and has 51 member denominations.

The statement, For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility, addresses not only issues and goals but the method of influencing public policy. While it does not endorse specific legislation, the document calls for Christians to work for the transformation of "both individuals and institutions." It also says evangelicals should act with humility, civility and integrity in the process.



Dobson

"While we may frequently settle for 'half-a-loaf,' we must never compromise principle by engaging in unethical behavior or endorsing or fostering sin," the statement says. "As we rightly engage in supporting legislation, candidates and political parties, we must be clear that biblical faith is vastly larger and richer than every limited, inevitably imperfect political agenda and that commitment to the Lordship of Christ and his one body far transcends all political commitments."

In addition to opposing abortion, euthanasia, and same-sex marriage, the document urges care for the poor, the disabled, the persecuted, the elderly, minori-



Colson

ties and refugees both in the United States and overseas. It calls for churches to "model good race relations."

The statement encourages governments to use their militaries only under "just-war" criteria and after pursuing peace nonviolently. "Just-war" theory is a classical Christian approach to the use of force that requires certain standards, such as a just cause and its utilization as a last resort.

Land, who did not attend the Washington event, commended the document for speaking "eloquently and succinctly of our call to engage the public policy debates."

Though Land signed the document as released, he expressed hope that some revisions he recommended would be made. Those suggestions had received what he characterized as a "very favorable" response from NAE.

Among those proposals, he recommended a sentence on evangelicals' "normative vision" be changed to make it clear that the understanding of the "moral order that God has embedded in his creation" must be biblically informed. In the section on religious liberty, Land recommended a sentence that includes the phrase "gospel pluralism," which describes the fact



Warren

"those who obey and those who disobey God coexist in society and share in its blessings," be revised to eliminate the phrase to say: "This coexistence is foundational to the religious liberty of all."

Land also proposed the removal of the phrase "in opportunity and outcome" from this sentence: "Though the Bible does not call for economic equality, it condemns gross disparities in opportunity and outcome that cause suffering and perpetuate poverty, and it calls for us to work toward equality of opportunity."



## JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Twenty-three youth and five adults from **Immanuel Church, Cleveland**, recently participated in a True Love Waits Retreat at Central Hills, Kosciusko. Shown are the participants.
2. Stephen McMorris was licensed to the gospel ministry at **First Church, Summit**. Shown are his father, Stan McMorris, McMorris, and Jennifer McMorris.
3. **Ebenezer Church, Liberty**, will be selling long stem red roses for \$4.00 a stem in honor or memory of past and present members in celebrating its May 2006 200th anniversary. Send order requests to: Kitty Ivey, 2787 Lower Centreville Rd., Liberty, Miss. 39645.
4. **Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson**, celebrated the retirement of all financial debt with a note-burning ceremony on Mar. 13. Shown, left to right, are Phillip Cooper, pastor; Bill Gore; Gary Stewart; Doug Norsworthy; and Charlie Gray.
5. **Crenshaw Church, Crenshaw**, will have a centennial celebration on Sun., Apr. 17. Former pastors speaking at 10:30 a.m.; lunch at noon; and history and testimony at 1:30 p.m. Clint Harris, pastor.
6. The RAs and GAs of **Lakeland Southern Church, Mantachie**, recently held a program called Go Tell It On the Mountain. They were awarded badges and vests.
7. **Williamsville Church, Kosciusko**, celebrated an organ dedication in honor of organist Judy Sims who has served the church for over 40 years. Performing in her honor was her grandson Jason Sims. Also honoring Sims were her sons, Donny and Tommy Sims, grandson Jordan Sims, and minister of music Doug Hubbard.
8. **First Church, Ridgeland**, congratulates their youth Bible drillers: Kristen Diffy and Hunter Embry. Leaders are Virginia Ross and Gene Huffman.
9. **First Church, Ridgeland**, congratulates their children's Bible drillers. Shown, from left: McKenna Ford, Joshua Newell, Marissa Blount, Garison Arinder, Hunter Embry, Austin Sims, Olivia Ford, Brooke Thomas, Amellia Pearman, Ryan Dement, Daniel Diffy, and John Ross. Leaders: Melinda Sims, Lynn Hill, Jamie Ross, and Linda Lofton.
10. The youth group of **Hopewell Church, Little Rock**, hosted a Valentine Banquet Feb. 12, serving full course steak dinners to attendees.



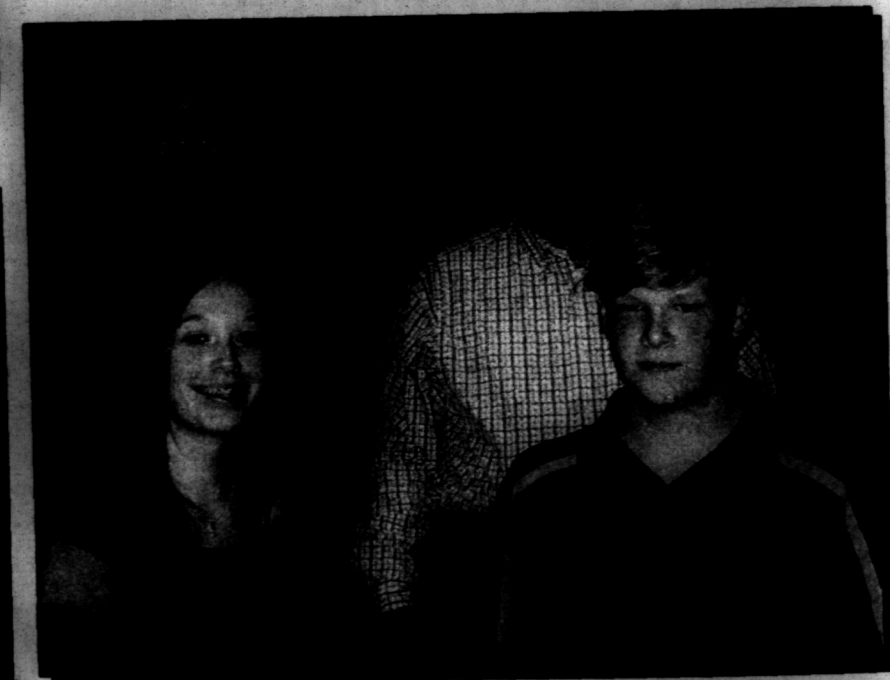
6. RAs and GAs of Lakeland Southern Church, Mantachie



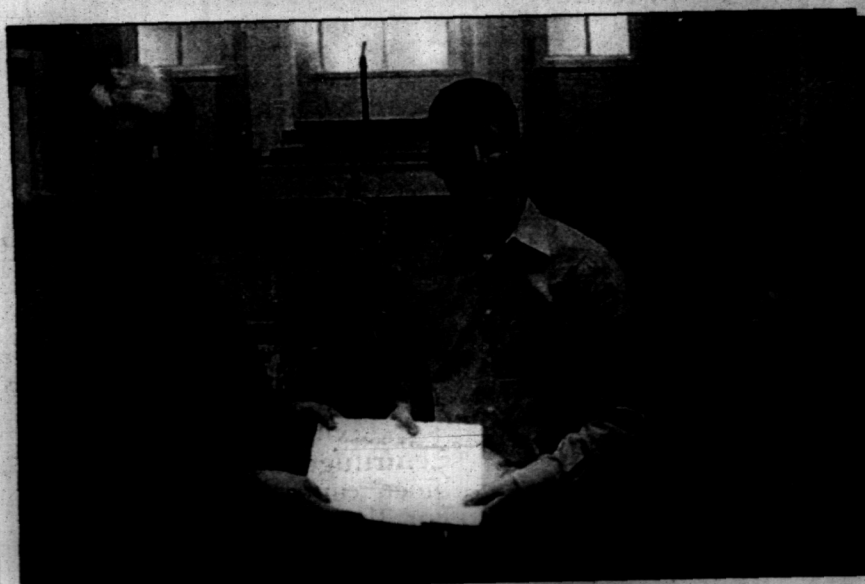
1. True Love Waits Retreat, Immanuel Church, Cleveland



7. Organ Dedication, Williamsville Church, Williamsville



8. Youth Bible Drillers, First Church, Ridgeland



2. Ordination of McMorris, First Church, Summit



9. Children's Bible Drillers, First Church, Ridgeland



4. Noteburning Ceremony, Griffith Memorial Church, Jackson

### Bibliocipher

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HUG PF. NHZG, YPFLFIJLF  
NHZG Z KUYJ XJK, YPHY  
UJ. WHU EHU EJWF KUYJ  
WF, FTEFOY ZY RFLF  
CZQFU KUYJ PZW JI WX  
IHYPFL.

BJPU NZT:NZTYX-IZQF

Clue: K = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-One:Twenty Seven.



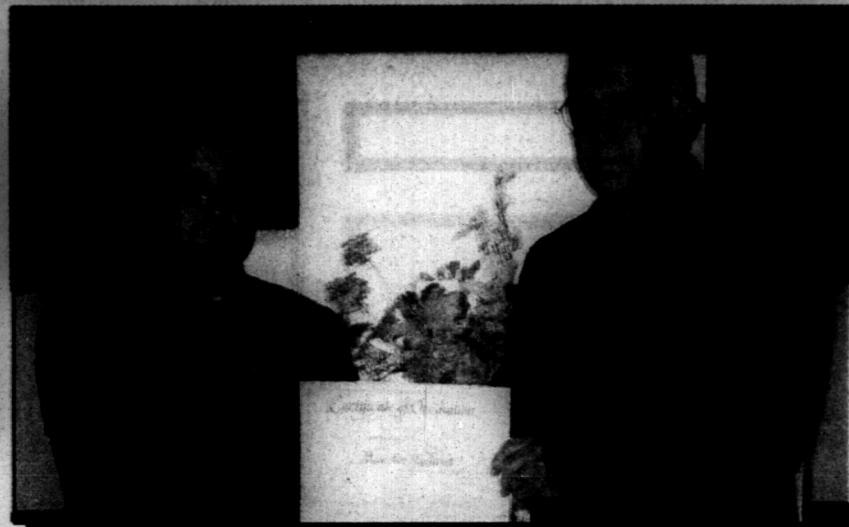
## JUST FOR THE RECORD

9. The Brotherhood of Corinth Church, Heidelberg, recently roofed the home of an elderly lady in their community Feb. 5. Shown are the workers.



9. Brotherhood of Corinth Church, Heidelberg

10. Eddie Parker, pastor of First Church, Oloh, ordained Jimmy Hayes, II, to the ministry on Feb. 20. Hayes serves as youth minister at Whitesand Church, Prentiss. Shown are Hayes and Parker.



10. Ordination of Jimmy Hayes II, First Church, Oloh

11. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will have a community singing event on Sat., Apr. 16, featuring The Geeslin Grothers. Call (662) 895-2661 for more information.

12. First Church, Madison, ordained Robert E. Washington to the ministry Mar. 13. John Temple gave the charge to the candidate and Jim Futral gave the charge to the church. Shown are Futral, Washington, Diann Washington, and Temple.



12. Ordination of Robert E. Washington, First Church, Madison

13. Joey Bland was ordained to the ministry Feb. 27 at Star Church, Star. Shown are Vic Bowman, Monica Bland, Bland, and Gary Glass.



13. Ordination of Joey Bland, Star Church, Star

### HOMEcomings

**Roundaway Church, Sunflower County: Homecoming, April 24, 10:45 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Noon meal. Ed McDaniel, speaker; Gary Sheppard, music. For more information, call (662) 887-5675 or (662) 887-5759.**

**Calvary Church, Mt. Olive: Homecoming, Apr. 3. Gospel singing, The Revelations, Florence, 1:30 p.m.**

### HOSPICE CHAPLAIN: UNITY HOSPICE CARE

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### OBITUARY

**Charles T. Heltman, 83,** died on Feb. 16. A minister for over sixty years, he served as pastor of Bogue Chitto Church, near McComb and Lena Church. He is survived by his wife Evelyn and two daughters.

### COLLEGE NEWS



1. WCC Speech and Debate Team

1. The William Carey College (WCC) Speech and Debate Team placed first in overall individual events and debate sweepstakes at the National Christian College Forensics Invitational held recently at California Baptist University, Riverside, Calif. Approximately 20 Christian colleges and universities attended the tournament. The Crusader team also competed at the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensics Tournament, St. Louis, Mo., two days after the California tournament. The team received an Excellent in Individual Events Sweepstakes award. Shown, from left, are participants

Phillip Londree, Josiah Burns, Mike Perez, Sylvia Caver, Richard Sandberg, Maggie Barwick, Dan Schabot (director of forensics), and Megan Odom.

2. The Winters School of Music, WCC, will present Josef Haydn's Mass in Time of War May 1, 3 p.m., with the William Carey Chorale and full classical orchestra, conducted by Karl Nelson. The performance is in the Dumas L. Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Tickets are \$5 or \$2.50 for groups of 10 or more. For more information, call (601) 318-6175.

3. An exhibit of new paintings by Sylvia Doucet Stanton, Joie de Vivre, opens Mar. 31 and hangs through May 6 in the Lucille Parker Gallery in Thomas Hall on the WCC Hattiesburg campus. Admission is free; the gallery is open 1 - 4 p.m. Mon. - Fri. or by appointment. Call (601) 318-6192 for information.

4. Mississippi College (MC) is the pilot site for a new Centrifuge/M-Fuge combined camp this summer. For the past three summers, MC has been host to two LifeWay sponsored camps: Centrifuge, geared toward 7th - 12th grade students, and Centri-Kid, for 3rd - 6th graders. This summer, both Centrifuge and M-Fuge, a LifeWay camp designed to teach students how to serve and minister in communities around the country at the world, will combine for a camp experience at MC. M-fuge will work with over 30 Jackson area organizations during the summer. At MC alone, 307 professions of faith, 1248 rededications, and 69 calls to the ministry have been recorded by LifeWay in 2002-2004.

### STAFF CHANGES



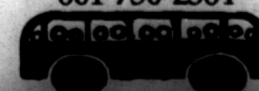
Smothers and wife Jada

Slayden Church, Marshall/Lafayette Association, has a new youth director. Benjamin Smothers, of Addison, Ala., is a first year student at MABTS, Memphis, Tenn. Pictured with Smothers is his wife Jada.

Newhebron Church, Lawrence County, proudly welcomes S.A. (Sonny) Adkins as their new pastor effective on May 1.

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# Baucham: proclaim Gospel, expect trouble

## REVIVALS

**Hebron Church, Pheba:** Friend Day, Apr. 3. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.

**Calvary Church, Braxton:** Revival, Apr. 3-5, 7 p.m. The Revelations, music.

**Liberty Church, Newton County:** Revival, April 10-13. Sun., 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00 p.m. Doyle Boyles, speaker. Gary Thorne, music. Joey Lang, pastor.

**First Church, Carthage:** Revival, April 10-13. Sun., 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jim Futral, speaker; Jeffrey Jones, Leesburg Church, music.

**Priceville Church, Tupelo:** Revival, April 10-13. Sun., 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00 p.m. Johnny Burns, Ramer, Tenn., evangelist. Tim Tutor, pastor.

**Siloam Church, Magee:** Revival, April 10-13. Sun., 11:00 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jay Westbrooks, Corinth Church, Magee, evangelist; Travis Rushing, Mount Zion Church, Crystal Springs, leading worship. James Garner, pastor.

**Cedar View Church, Olive Branch:** Revival, April 10-13. Sun., 8:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., followed by potluck luncheon, and 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:00 p.m. P. J. Scott, evangelist; William J. Britton, music.

**Fellowship Church, Ellisville:** Revival, Apr. 10-13. Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Donnie Guy, evangelist; Devon Sellers, music.

**Bethany Church, Choctaw County:** Revival, April 13-17. Don Parish of Victory Church, Mathison, will preach, and Mike Adams of Bethany will lead music. Marion Tumberlinson, pastor.

**Courtland Church, Courtland:** Revival, April 15-16, 7:00 p.m. Roy Southern will preach a dedication service for the new building on April 17, followed by meal, testimonies, and music.

**Siloam Church, West Point:** Revival, Apr. 17-20. Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; evangelist, Randall Creel; music, Buddy Johnson; Mike Fondren, pastor.

**Leaf River, Pineville Community, Smith County:** Revival, Apr. 24-27. Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jay Westbrooks, Evangelist; Danny Harrison, music; Max Price, Interim Pastor.

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Bottled water. When the phenomenon burst onto the scene, it answered the question: Would anyone pay for water? In 2004 alone, U.S. consumers spent an estimated \$8 billion on bottled water—but why spend so much on water and what does bottled water have to do with revival?

"You buy it because you know it's pure," New Orleans Seminary President Chuck Kelley said with a container of bottled water in his hand.

Standing before a crowd of students and faculty gathered for New Orleans Seminary's campus-wide revival, Kelley poured the pure bottled water into a glass that was already partially filled with mud and dirt. The result was a glass full of murky, cloudy, undrinkable water. The object lesson was clear and cutting.

"God will not pour His anointing into a dirty vessel," Kelley said.

The March 1-3 revival led by author and speaker Voddie Baucham called students, faculty and staff to inspect their lives and ministries to see if whether they constituted "dirty vessels." Baucham, a former college football standout, urged a self-examination of character, motives and resolve in light of God's calling.

Speaking from 2 Timothy during the revival, Baucham noted, "Every chapter of this letter, we see that two-pronged theme—that theme of preserving and proclaiming the Gospel and, side by side with it, the idea of enduring the suffering that will

inevitably come as a result of doing so."

Christians are called to preserve and proclaim the Gospel and to endure the hardships that go along with it, Baucham said.

"That's where we are this week," he said, "to ask God to revive us to that kind of calling, because there are times when, for whatever reason, one of those two things gets out of whack."

In focusing on the calling to preserve and proclaim the Gospel, Baucham confronted the seminarians with this question: "Are you one of us or are you one of them?" Chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, he noted, forces the Christian to ask himself or herself a similar question.

"That's the question we all have to answer, because there are people out there who misrepresent Christ and Christianity every day," Baucham. "Well-trained, well-educated, gifted and rotten to the core."

In the first half of chapter 3, the Apostle Paul describes people around Timothy who hold to "a form of godliness, although they have denied its power" (verse 5). These people rest on their abilities, their talents and their gifts instead of relying on God.



REVIVAL SPEAKER — Author-Bible teacher Voddie Baucham, in his messages from 2 Timothy during campus revival services at New Orleans Seminary, asked, "Are you living life with an eternal perspective?" (Photo by Katherine Albers)

"I want to ask you something," Baucham said. "Are you involved in ministry now or are you moving toward ministry now because somebody told you that you are gifted? Or are you moving toward ministry because you have a character that will serve as the foundation upon which God can build greatness for Himself and for His namesake?"

Put another way: "Are you developing godly character," Baucham asked, "or are you just developing skills that will make you a good living someday?"

Returning to his question of "Are you one of us or are you one of them?" Baucham noted that

the "them" are the self-reliant, whereas Paul uses Timothy to represent the "us." In 2 Timothy 3:10-11, Paul contrasted Timothy's conduct with the others: "Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions and sufferings."

"If you've been living as one of 'them' ..., I admonish you. Repent," Baucham said, "but if you can't do that, do me a favor. Get off the bus before you embarrass my God."

Holding up the Bible, Baucham said, "If this isn't what you start with, it doesn't matter what you build with."

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**LIVING FAITH MINISTRIES**, an evangelist ministry specializing in revivals, fill in service, interim and youth. We are committed to bringing a fresh word from God that will change our lives. We believe that God has given us a word in due season for the body of Christ. Evangelist Steve Smith, contact at (601) 672-1862 or (601) 346-4476, [www.stevesmithministries.org](http://www.stevesmithministries.org).

**DOING A BATTLE WITH SATAN**, a soldier of the cross, available to speak, James Nichols. Call (601) 425-2656, Laurel, Miss. References: Rev. Ken Regan, Heritage Heights Baptist Church, 4140 Hwy 15 North, Laurel, MS 39440. Also, Stan Hefrington, 252 Eastview Drive, Laurel, MS 39443. "Standing in The Gap." **1991 FORD 15 PASSENGER VAN.** Mileage is 49k, good condition, tires like new. The price is \$5,000 (negotiable), call (601) 939-4766.



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**PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER:** Griffith Memorial Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of youth. Preference will be given to mature individuals with youth related ministry experience. Mail resume to Griffith Memorial Baptist Church, attn: youth minister search committee, 5275 Terry Road, Jackson, MS 39212.



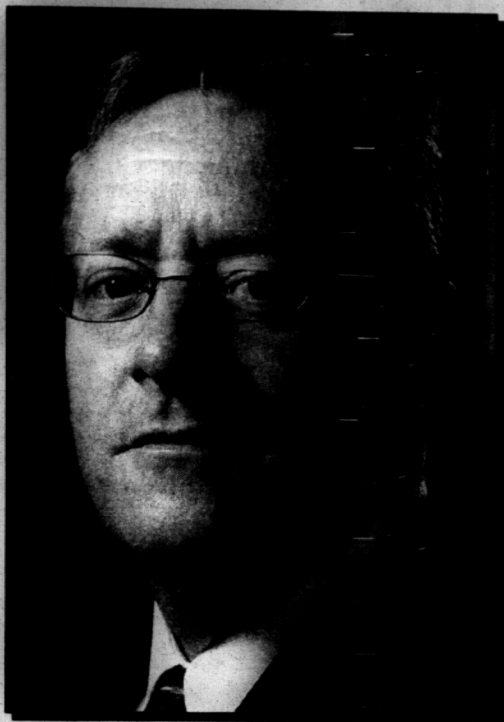
# Judge rules in La. College president dispute

PINEVILLE, La. (ABP and local reports) — The election of Joe Aguillard as Louisiana College president is valid despite a presidential search process that failed to follow established procedure, an Alexandria judge ruled March 17.

The ruling by Ninth Judicial District Judge Dexter Ryland ends a lawsuit that sought to invalidate Aguillard's election as president of the Louisiana Baptist school. The suit charged that Aguillard's election was invalid because a majority of school trustees did not follow the presidential search procedure as set forth in the governing bylaws. The suit was filed by several alumni and supporters of Louisiana College, as well as one retired faculty member who also was a member of the original presidential search committee.

After receiving a full day of testimony in late February and oral arguments from attorneys March 17, Ryland agreed that established procedure was not followed in the election of Aguillard as president but added he "was properly elected president of the college."

The matter in question dates back to March 2003, when then-president Rory Lee announced his resignation and a search committee was formed to replace him.



Aguillard

Lee is presently serving as executive director of the Baptist Children's Village, an institution of the Mississippi Baptist Convention headquartered in Jackson.

The committee appointed to find Lee's replacement worked under constant criticism from some who wanted Aguillard as president. Though he was considered as a nominee, he was not among the top three finalists.

Eventually, the committee settled on Southwestern Seminary educator Malcolm

Yarnell as their top candidate. He was presented to the full board and elected on a divided vote. In ensuing days, he attended several college events as the school's incoming president. Contract negotiations between Yarnell and the board hit a snag. Just days after addressing the annual Louisiana Baptist Convention, Yarnell withdrew his name from consideration.

Trustees relaunched the search process in December, this time with a blended search committee that included the original members as well as new trustee leaders. Board members directed the search committee to consider Aguillard first as a presidential nominee and bring his name to the board for action.

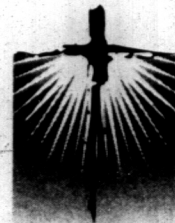
All but one of the original search committee members protested the moves, saying the board went outside established procedure. The school bylaws clearly state the search committee is to remain in place until the presidential office has been "filled." Since Yarnell never signed a contract, the office was never filled, they said. Other trustees said that since Yarnell received compensation for attending school events, the post was filled and the original search committee no longer was in place.

All but two of the original

search committee members then chose not to be involved with the blended committee. The remaining members quickly interviewed Aguillard and presented him as a presidential nominee during a called board meeting on Jan. 17. Then-interim president John Traylor also was nominated at the meeting, but Aguillard was elected on a 17-13 vote.

The suit was filed soon afterwards. In his ruling, Ryland acknowledged that Aguillard was not nominated by the procedure outlined in Louisiana College bylaws and that Yarnell never "filled" the position of president but, he noted, Aguillard was nominated from the floor by a valid trustee and received a majority vote.

He said the central question is whether a president has to be nominated by a search committee and, on that point, he ruled there is no prohibition against floor nominations for the post.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

### CONGRESS IGNORED

Editor:

I am incensed that twice in as many weeks, a state court in Florida and a federal court in Florida have ignored the Congress of the United States. I am more incensed that the courts have handed down a death sentence on a woman (Terri Schiavo) without due process.

It is bad enough to remove the feeding tube of a cognitive brain-damaged person but quite another to prevent her parents from giving food and water. If she can't swallow, then why prohibit her parents from giving food and water? Something stinks to high heaven here!

We need immediate intervention, investigation, and an impartial hearing with someone representing Terri Schiavo.

Author Comans  
Madison

Editor's note: At press time on March 29, Terri Schiavo was alive but "fading fast," in the words of her family.

### BAPTIST TSUNAMI

Editor:

This silly nonsense that we are seeing and hearing about has erupted into what I call a Baptist tsunami. It is a killer wave that is ravaging Southern Baptist churches throughout America.

I was taught by pastors in days and years gone by that Baptists were people of the Book (the Bible), but that is no longer true. We have preachers who will proudly say they believe the Bible to be inerrant but their actions prove differently. They run off to Saddleback, get in Rick Warren's rock concerts and head back south, snatch off their tie, put on their T-shirt and blue jeans, and bring a little 15-minute sermonette they call relevant and have their people sing songs that they do not even understand, and call it worship. It may be worship, but it is not worshipping the Almighty God of the Bible.



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This killer wave is far more destructive than the Asian tsunami. It is telling sinners they are okay, just believe — and pagans by the thousands are responding to this silly nonsense they call church. They never hear a message on the precious blood of Christ without which no one could ever be saved. These so-called preachers never mention Hell and people are going there without Christ. They never tell their congregation they have to repent.

If we Southern Baptists continue down this trail we will lose our witness. In fact, that has already begun. Let us turn back to the Ole Book that our forefathers believed.

Vaughn W. Denton, pastor  
Magnolia Church  
Olive Branch

### SPREAD THE GOSPEL

Editor:

Hurrah for guest opinions like Matt Miller's (page 2, February 21 issue). Since the tragedy of the tsunami, I have thought about how many times they have told us to donate money, etc. Christian groups can go to help but they say, "Keep your mouth shut about Jesus." A southeast Asia official on the O'Reilly Factor on Fox News Network said basically the same thing.

Telling about Jesus and about God's love through Jesus is our whole purpose. Yes, it is fine to hand out water, food, and clothing, and to help rebuild, but Jesus didn't say to do these things and "keep your mouth shut." He said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you until the end of the age." This is the Great Commission.

We are to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ wherever we go. If people will not hear or receive the Gospel, that is their choice but we are to tell them. When I mail my payments for anything I enclose a devotional. Someone will see it. When I do my shopping, I leave a devotional somewhere — maybe in the ladies' room or on a counter. Someone gets the message. We don't all have the eloquence of speech like some, but we can get the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people.

Jenelle Christman  
Bruce

### SANSING HONORED

Editor:

Four years ago this month our church, and indeed all Mississippi Baptists, lost a dear saint when L. Gordon Sansing went home to be with his Lord.

Many across the Southern Baptist Convention will remember Sansing as the associate executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention board, the founding pastor of Broadmoor Church in Jackson, and other various roles in which he served, but I will always remember him as the gentle encourager who stood beside me on the platform and supported me as I tried to pastor where God had placed me. Sansing was truly special and had the wonderful ability to make others feel special too.

Westwood Church, Meridian, has recently established the L. Gordon Sansing Memorial Scholarship to honor his many years of service to our church, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and most importantly his faithfulness to the Lord. Realizing that others who have been touched by his ministry may want to participate in the memorial, I would like to offer the following

address. Contributions may be sent to the L. Gordon Sansing Scholarship, Westwood Baptist Church, 1224 65th Avenue, Meridian, MS 39307.

Richie Davis, pastor  
Westwood Church  
Meridian

### TRIBUTE TO 'DOC'

Editor:

Much can be said about "Doc" — James L. (Jack) Travis, longtime professor of biblical studies at Blue Mountain College who died on February 13. He stood tall in the faith. Yes, it is true that dynamite comes in small packages.

It was a delight to see Doc's shining face when you came into his classroom. It was if he had seen Jesus, for I know he had met Jesus early in the morning hours in Scripture. He knew that if you would see God in the morning, you would have Him through the day. What a joy to sit under his teaching as he unveiled the Word of God. The Word of God would come alive in your heart and set your heart on fire. You felt as if you could put out the fires of hell with a water pistol.

Doc enjoyed life to the fullest. He had more than just happiness — he had joy. Happiness depends on your circumstance, while joy depends on Christ. I can still hear the stories and jokes that made so many of us laugh. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

So many of you have seen Doc run in many races, for his health and for fun, and win. Others have seen Doc run the race for the faith, and win. Can you not hear his voice to ministers, missionaries, and teachers: "Run. Run, I say, not for the gold but for the glory of God."

Don McCutchen, pastor  
New Faith Church  
Pontotoc



## Investing for the future

Is your church being the best steward of its investments? How can you best plan for your church's future? How can you have a lasting impact for Christ in your community and around the world? Are these questions that your church asks itself? If so, we at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation can help.

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## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### Needed: Real Faith

James 1:16-18, 21-27; 2:14-19

By Rick Henson

We read in Hebrews 11:6a "But without faith it is impossible to please him." What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 informs us, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith, however, is not some entity in itself that is to be prized. We are saved only by faith in Jesus. Galatians 3:26 reads, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." According to some TV preachers, faith itself is what saves us and we just need more of it, as if we could work up some more faith. These glab-it-and-grab-it guys teach that you don't have wealth or health because you don't have enough faith. By their standard Paul did not have enough faith to be healed of his

thorn in the flesh, although God told Him that His grace was sufficient. No. True faith in God believes Him in every circumstance, not simply so that He will change our circumstances. If our service to God depends upon Him serving us and answering our prayers the way we want, then He is not our Lord at all. Real faith results in service to God in every circumstance (Philippians 4:10-13).

The object of our Faith, Jesus Christ, is what saves us, not our faith in itself. Otherwise, faith in Buddha, Hare Krishna, or even Mighty Mouse could save us and change our lives. Real faith is found only in Jesus Christ, and is even a gift from God. 2 Timothy 3:15 reads, "From a child thou hast known

the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

So we know what faith is and its source, but since faith is not seen, how do we know that we have genuine faith? One of our focal passages in James 1:21-27 tells us to be doers of the word and not hearers only. In fact the passage states that if we hear the word and do not do it, we are deceiving ourselves. We are instructed here that true religion is to minister to those people in need and keep ourselves clean in the world. In other words, genuine faith must result in a changed life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

A passage in Ephesians addresses this balance of faith and works. Ephesians 2:8-10:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." According to this passage we are saved by faith, not by works, and we are saved to work. The order is essential; salvation and then works. Works can never result in salvation, but genuine salvation always results in good works. James 2:17 reads, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

James addressed this in James 2:14-19. He wrote that if one sees a brother or sister who is hungry or naked and wishes them well without taking action, then we have not proved or demonstrated our faith. James further argued that even the demons in hell believe in God. Faith is far more than just agreeing with facts. Real faith

in Jesus Christ results in eternal salvation and present action. If Jesus is our Lord, and we seek to follow Him, then we should emulate Him. Ephesians 5:1-2 teaches us, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

James concluded his argument by writing, "show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Real faith is demonstrated to the world by actions. Jesus stated that our treatment of each other is the proof of our conversion. John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The world is looking for real faith. Do you have real faith?

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Learn to Obey the Lord

Jeremiah 11:6-14

By Billie Buckley

One day God told Jeremiah, "Listen carefully. Then go and tell the disobedient people of Judah what I said."

Jeremiah was told to tell them: "The covenant deal I made with you on Mt. Sinai will be closed. Judgment's coming. There is no exit."

Did you ever wonder why God said this? It seems to me all He desired from His children was a love relationship with them.

They just couldn't seem to learn this love language lesson. Why? They only listened to what they wanted to hear. We can learn something about ourselves, too. Our listening is a loving way of affirming someone's real worth and value. How strange we do not listen to our

Father. Does that mean we do not value our relationship with Him?

Again and again God would ask, "Are these conditions of blessings clear? My words are reliable, enduring and stable. They bless you or condemn you. Jeremiah, you tell my people to make a choice. Is this clear?"

Jeremiah answered God, "Amen."

This word "amen" means "so be it". If God said it, it's a done deal. In this lesson He is telling us to listen, to stop being disobedient to avoid judgment.

First lesson: Learn to Listen. (vv.6-8) The people of Judah never listened or took the Lord seriously. Today many laugh at a final deserved judgment.

His Word, and what we are to do with it, points out the

path leading us to the safety of His presence and away from His judgment.

Verse 7 reads, "Obey my words." We have freedom to do this or face the consequences.

Then God pleaded, "Don't be stubborn."

They answered, "Why bother? It's too boring, too formal, too uncomfortable and too old-fashioned. When we are told to listen, do we answer in the same way?"

Could it be they just didn't hang around long enough to hear Him? Do we? Do you, Sunday School teacher? How much time is spent daily in His Word listening to Him face to face? No preacher. No music. No charismatic Bible study leaders. Just God speaking and your listening to Him with the help of the Holy Spirit. Don't dare teach without adding this step to your lesson preparation. Oh, yes, it will take time to listen to Him.

Second lesson: Break Disobedient Patterns. (vv. 9-10)

Here God's judgment comes as no big surprise. It was required as a result of decades of sin.

Are Christians judged? Yes. This judgment is not placed on our positional faith in Jesus Christ. I think preachers call this event justification. Only grace is found here.

This judgment is placed on our functioning faith becoming barren, not bearing fruit by bringing man and God together. This is a growth process and preachers call it sanctification.

The choice is ours. Break our disobedient patterns or face the judgment.

Third lesson: Avoid Judgment. (vv.11-14) Does God enjoy judging?

Some think of God as a Hanging Judge ready to catch and punish them, taking pleasure in their pain.

Not so. He shares the pain. Yet in verse 14 He makes a shocking statement, "Don't pray for them anymore." Maybe He was tired of them giving Him a list and demanding, "Deliver this!"

We might need to look beyond these "don't pray" words as to why they were spoken. Maybe it's because the people wanted it both ways.

This is true today when we decide to cozy up to God only when we get into trouble. We are guilty of listening to self-help slogans while the Word talks about the disturbing reality of self-denial. This ought not to be.

Remember this: Jeremiah never changed this message even when it was rejected. Sunday School teachers and students, learn to listen and obey God or face the consequences.

Read the Bible for four reasons: (1) for the said Word, general knowledge for everyone; (2) for the saying Word, personalized by Holy Spirit for you; (3) for the praying Word, giving you prayer patterns; (4) for the responding Word, to "flesh out" the evidence of your faith. May He be more and more in your heart as you obey Him.

Buckley is a member of Petal-Harvey Church, Petal.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST  
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# Q & A: status of same-sex marriage in U.S.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A California judge's ruling has placed the issue of same-sex marriage back in the spotlight in America. Following is a list of commonly asked questions, with answers, related to the issue.

## • What did the judge in California rule?

The judge, Superior Court Judge Richard A. Kramer, struck down the state's marriage laws and ruled that California had "no rational basis" to ban same-sex marriage. In doing so he overturned the state's defense of marriage act, a 2000 law that explicitly banned gay marriage and had been passed by 61% of the voters.

## • What happens now?

The ruling is being appealed. The next stop is the California Court of Appeals. After that, it could be appealed to the state Supreme Court, which would have the final say.

## • Can anything be done?

Yes. Conservatives in the state are promoting a state constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage. Such an amendment is pending in the left-leaning legislature,

where it faces an uphill battle. But California citizens have another option — the petition. Similar to the process used to recall former Gov. Gray Davis, citizens could collect enough petitions to place a marriage amendment on the state ballot.

## • Is California the first state where such a ruling has been issued?

No. Including California, judges in four states have issued similar rulings in recent months. In November 2003, Massachusetts' high court issued its ruling legalizing gay marriage in that state; the ruling took effect last year. Trial court judges in Washington state issued pro-"gay marriage" rulings last year, and the Washington Supreme Court subsequently heard an appeal of the case March 8. Finally, a trial court judge in New York issued a pro-gay marriage ruling in February. It is being appealed but so far, Massachusetts is the only state to recognize same-sex marriage.

## • How many states are involved in same-sex marriage lawsuits?

Nine. They are: California, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington. The Oregon lawsuit likely is moot, being that voters there passed a constitutional amendment last year banning gay marriage.

## • Who are behind the lawsuits?

Liberal and homosexual activists groups. Two groups — Lambda Legal and the America Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) — are involved in most of the suits. Other small-

er groups, such as the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, also are involved. GLAD, involved in the Connecticut lawsuit, is the same legal group that won in Massachusetts.

## • How do marriage amendments help?

Marriage amendments provide an extra blanket of protection against pro-gay marriage judicial rulings. In the same way that the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution banned slavery, marriage amendments ban gay marriage. If Massachusetts had had a marriage amendment, then same-sex marriage there would still be outlawed.

## • How many states have marriage amendments?

Sixteen, although that number keeps growing. (Kansas, for instance will vote on a marriage amendment April 5.) A 17th state, Hawaii, has an amendment allowing its state legislature to ban same-sex marriage.

## • What is a civil union?

Civil unions provide same-sex couples most or all of the legal benefits of marriage, without using the term marriage. Vermont is the only state with civil unions. California has domestic partnerships, which are similar. Some of the marriage amendments ban civil unions and domestic partnerships.

## • What is the difference between a state marriage amendment and a federal marriage amendment?

State marriage amendments only provide protection against

state judges — which is significant, but not perfect. For instance, Ohio's amendment — passed last year — bans Ohio judges from legalizing gay marriage, but the amendment could be overturned in federal courts. In fact, Nebraska's and Oklahoma's amendments are being challenged in federal court. By comparison, a federal marriage amendment provides significantly stronger protection and prevents any court in America — state or federal — from legalizing same-sex marriage.

## • Could the U.S. Supreme Court eventually take up the gay marriage issue?

Yes. In fact, many legal experts say it's only a matter of time. If the high court takes up the case, it likely would be a review of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a 1996 federal law that gives states the option of not recognizing another state's same-sex marriages. The law also prevents the federal government from recognizing gay marriage." If DOMA is overturned, the nation would have court-ordered same-sex marriage. A federal marriage amendment would prevent the U.S. Supreme Court from issuing such a ruling.

## • What is required to pass a federal marriage amendment?

It must pass two-thirds of both the House and Senate and three-quarters of the states. The amendment is SJR 1 in the Senate. It has yet to be introduced in the House.

For more information about the national debate over same-sex "marriage," visit <http://www.bp-news.net/same-sexmarriage>.



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